

February 23, 2016

To whom it may concern:

These comments pertain to H.B. 5211, concerning Certificates of Need.

My name is Morton Glasser, MD, the Chief Medical Officer at Generations Family Health Center in Willimantic, Connecticut where I have held this position for the last 29 years. In addition, I have practiced medicine in Willimantic for the past 51 years and have seen many changes over this period of time.

When I first arrived, Windham Hospital had a capacity of 150 patient beds. Most of the time, these beds were filled. We treated very ill patients and had an active Intensive Care Unit. Referrals were made to tertiary hospitals such as Hartford Hospital mainly for sub-specialty care such as neurosurgery, cardiac cauterizations and cardiac surgery. Of course there were medical patients that were referred as well if they were complicated, such as patients with severe meningitis, status epilepticus, and so on. However, the overwhelming majority of patients admitted to Windham Hospital were treated appropriately and successfully over the years.

However, since Hartford Hospital took over Windham Hospital 5 years ago, we have seen a steady decline in our census. Currently, we have capacity for 30 to 35 in-patient beds at Windham Hospital. A large part of this is a result of more procedures being done on an out-patient basis. However, more and more patients are being transferred to Hartford Hospital, who otherwise would have remained at Windham Hospital for their care, ever since Hartford Hospital merged with Windham Hospital. Our ICU is no longer functioning in that capacity but rather is now a Progressive Care Unit which serves more or less as a holding unit for severely ill patients, but these patients are transferred out to Hartford Hospital Intensive Care after 2 or 3 days. In addition, various services in the hospital such as diabetic education, the wound clinic, and the sleep lab are at risk of being closed as well, although at the present time, they are still functioning.

The effects of these policies by Hartford Hospital wreak havoc with our most vulnerable patients. Most of our patients do not have proper transportation for their families to visit them at Hartford Hospital. Many patients who are discharged from Hartford Hospital and need convalescent care are being placed in facilities in the Hartford area rather than being returned to the Willimantic area which would be much more convenient for their families to visit. I am afraid that when the public realizes that there is a good chance that they will not receive the care that they need locally but rather will be transferred to Hartford Hospital, some patients may elect to defer their treatment with devastating consequences.

The changes that are occurring at Windham Hospital are being made without the informed consent of the citizens that comprise the catchment area of Windham Hospital. If there are no checks and balances, it is quite possible that Windham Hospital will continue to sink from a viable competent hospital that it once was, to a shadow of itself which unfortunately may lead to its closure.

I support this CON bill which would help create the transparency that is needed.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Morton Glasser". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Morton Glasser, MD  
Chief Medical Officer